

# LETTER

To the Rev. JAMES LISTER,

*Containing a Defence of "The New Testament, in an Improved Version," in Reply to a Lecture "On the Excellency of the Common English Version," delivered by him in Gloucester Street Chapel, on Wednesday Evening, Oct. 18th, 1820.*

PRICE THREEPENCE.

"The Salutary waters of life should be presented to the People, free from every pollution, no noxious weed should adulterate them; no poisonous plant, impart to them its pestiferous qualities; they should flow as pure as when they issued from Sion's Mount, as clear as dew drops, glittering in the Sun beams."—*Rev. George Harris' Lectures.*

REVEREND SIR,

I am not one of those whom you expected to depart from the Lecture, delivered by you on Wednesday evening last, satisfied with the arguments you brought against the correctness and fidelity of "The New Testament, in an Improved Version, upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's Translation;" nor did I depart satisfied that the ungentlemanly and illiberal remarks you made on that Version and on the Editors of it themselves, were consistent either with your character as a man, or with your office as a Christian Minister; to whom it belongs to read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and to give the sense, and to cause men to understand the reading; and not to vilify men and their work who, though perhaps not equal to the Rev. J. Lister in biblical or classical attainments, are, nevertheless, his superiors in that spirit which best becomes those who are followers of the Christ. The Editors of "The New Testament, in an Improved Version," do not, Sir, imitating the language you used in reference to that Version, call the English Version set forth by Authority, "the perfection of wickedness and folly."



These Editors "who make so much noise," do not "boldly falsify the testimony of the Holy Spirit," they do not "make the apostle (Paul) to lie, or a fool." No: when "the New Testament in an Improved Version," was sent into the world, its Editors had not the high advantage of the Rev. J. Lister's example to induce them to violate the principles of charity, and recklessly and carelessly to offend the prejudices of their brethren. You had not "enlightened" the world when they modestly placed this motto on the title page of their work: "No offence can justly be taken for this new labour; nothing prejudicing any other man's judgement by this doing; nor yet professing this so absolute a translation, as that hereafter might follow no other who might see that which as yet was not understood."\*

In the introductory remarks to the Lecture, after saying that the Deity of Christ and his Atonement, the doctrines of Original Sin and Endless Punishment, had been of late denied, you farther added, "and the certainty of a future judgment has been called in question;" by whom, you did not plainly intimate, but from the connection in which the sentence alluded to was used, your hearers would understand that you meant, by the Unitarians; or as you improperly called them "the Socinians." Now, Sir,

"Either you must  
Confess yourself wondrous malicious,  
Or be accused of folly."

For it is universally acknowledged by "the Socinians," deny it if you can, that a future judgment is most certain. Indeed they insist more on this doctrine than the pseudo-named Orthodox; and defend it too, from the surest grounds, on the declarations of Christ, and on his being raised from the dead by the power of God alone. "Let modern critics hear" Dr. Adam Clarke on this subject. In his notes on 1 Cor. xv. ch. the Doctor says, "One remark I cannot help making; the doctrine of the *resurrection*, appears to have been thought of much more consequence among the primitive christians than

\* Archbishop Parker's Preface to the Bishop's Bible.



it is *now* ! How is this ? The apostles were continually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God to diligence, obedience and cheerfulness, through it. And their successors in the present day seldom mention it ! So apostles preached and so primitive christians believed ; so we preach ; and so our hearers believe. "There is not a doctrine of the gospel on which more stress is laid ; and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect." Is not this an acknowledgment, that what is called evangelical preaching in the present day is essentially different from the preaching of the apostles ?

Mr. Wilkinson, a Calvinist Minister at Saffron-Walden, in a Sermon lately published, on "The Resurrection of the Dead," says, "It is not a little to be wondered at, that such a subject should have SO PARTIAL, and apparently SO ACCIDENTAL a place in public discussions, and that among the few important topics of conversation, it should be SO RARELY ADMITTED." These writers must of course, refer to their own religious parties, to those whom they esteem orthodox.

If, then, you knew as you ought to have done, that the Unitarians most firmly, and to a man believe, in a future judgment, was it fair, just, or manly, did it show a proper Christian spirit, to insinuate that they rejected it ? If you knew they look forward to a future judgment when an account is to be given of every idle word,\* was not your assertion malicious inasmuch as you spoke evil falsely and knowingly ; if you were ignorant, was it not "the perfection of folly," to mistake and have your hearers believe your mistatement ? *Utrum horum mavis accipe.*

But before I proceed farther, it would not be just were I not to acknowledge that the account you gave of the Versions which preceded our common one, was in the highest degree interesting, and such, I speak for myself, as could not be otherwise than very instructive to your audience. To this part of the Lecture I have nothing to object, but much to praise for the clearness of its statements, and for the information which

\* See Matt. xii. 36.



it afforded: but I have somewhat to object against the second, third, and fourth parts of the Lecture.

The 2nd division of your Lecture, contained an History of the present Version, and the rules by which King James' Translators were directed in their work. Under this head you asserted, that "the time our Translation (the common one) was made, was remarkable for classical learning," and adduced as proofs the number of the works of classic authors which were then published. Now, Sir, far from the æra referred to being "remarkable for classical learning," the study of the ancient Greek and Latin authors was then but lately revived. Doctor Campbell says, in his Preliminary Observations, to which yourself referred, "That Translation, (the common English one) we all know, was made at a time when the study of the original languages, which had been long neglected, was just revived in Europe. To this the invention of Printing first, and the Reformation soon afterwards, had greatly contributed." "The study of the languages naturally introduces the study of criticism, I mean that branch of criticism which has language for its object; and which is, in effect, no other than the utmost improvement of the grammatical art. But this, it must be acknowledged, was not then arrived at that perfection which, in consequence of the labours of many learned and ingenious men, of different parties and professions, it has reached since. What greatly retarded the progress of this study in the first age of the reformation, was the incessant disputes in which the reformers were engaged, about articles of doctrine, ecclesiastical polity, and ceremonies, both with the Romanists and among themselves. This led them insensibly to recur to the weapons which had been employed against them, and of which they had at first spoken contemptuously, the metaphysical and unintelligible subtleties of school divinity."

"This recourse was productive of two bad consequences. First it diverted them from the critical study of the sacred languages, the surest human means of discovering the mind of the spirit: secondly, it infused into the heads of the disputants, prepossessions in favour of such particular words and phrases as are adapted to the dialect and system of the parties



to which they severally attached themselves: and in prejudice of those words and phrases which seem more suitable to the style and sentiments of their adversaries. There is, perhaps, but too good reason for adding an evil consequence produced also upon the heart, in kindling wrath and quenching charity. It was when matters were in this situation, that several of the first translations were made. Men's minds were then too much heated with their polemic squabbles, to be capable of that impartial, candid, and dispassionate examination, which is so necessary in those who would approve themselves faithful interpreters of the word of God."

"In regard to the common translation, though not entirely exempted from the influence of party and example, it is, upon the whole, *one of the best* of those composed so soon after the Reformation. I may say justly that, if it had not been for an immoderate attachment, in its authors, to the Genevese translators, Junius, Tremellius, and Beza, it had been still better than it is; for the greatest faults with which it is chargeable are derived from this source. But since that time it must be owned things are greatly altered in the church. The rage of disputation on points rather curious than edifying, or as the Apostle calls it, the dotage about questions and strifes of words,\* has, at least among men of talents and erudition, in a great measure subsided. The reign of scholastic sophistry and altercation is pretty well over. Now, when to this reflection we add a proper attention to the great acquisitions in literature which have of late been made, in respect not only of languages, but also of antiquities and criticism, it cannot be thought derogatory from the merit and abilities of those worthy men who formerly bestowed their time and labour on that important work, to suppose that many mistakes, which were then inevitable, we are now in a condition to correct."

"To effect this, is the first, and ought, doubtless, to be the principal, motive for attempting another version. Whatever is discovered to be the sense of the Spirit, speaking in the Scriptures, ought to be regarded by us as of the greatest consequence: nor will any judicious person, who has not been ac-

\* See Tim. vi. 4.



customed to consider religion in a political light, as a mere state engine, deny that where the truth appears, in any instance, to have been either misrepresented, or but obscurely represented, in a former version, the fault ought, in an attempt like the present, as far as possible, to be corrected. To say the contrary, is to make the honourable distinction of being instruments in promoting the knowledge of God of less moment, than paying a vain compliment to former translators, or, perhaps, showing an immoderate deference to popular humour, which is always attached to customary phrases, whether they convey the true meaning, or a false meaning, or any meaning at all. This, therefore, is unquestionably a good ground for varying from those who preceded us." \*

From this, Sir, it appears that far from "biblical learning being at a low ebb during the last century," that century and not "the time when our translation was made" was remarkable for classical learning; for great acquisitions "not only in respect of languages but also of antiquities and criticism." Far from the contentions between Catholic and Protestant, as you asserted, adding to the excellency and worth of "our version," and "putting it to the severest test;" what greatly retarded the progress of this study (the study of the original languages) in the first age of the Reformation, was *the incessant disputes* in which the Reformers were engaged, about Articles of Doctrine, Ecclesiastical Polity, and Ceremonies both with the *Romanists* and *among themselves*. This part of your Lecture is then not founded in fact.

In support of the English common version, under the 3rd head of your lecture you brought forward the testimony of many learned men. I grant you at the time in which these learned men lived that the common English version was the very best in the language; but since their time "it must be owned things are greatly altered in the church," "upwards of 300 Manuscripts, either of the whole or of different parts of the New Testament, have been collated with much care, indus-

\* See Dissertation the eleventh, Part II. vol. I p. 567—570. On the regard due to the English Translation. In a work entitled "The Four Gospels translated from the Greek, with Preliminary Dissertations and Notes critical and explanatory. By George Campbell, D. D. F. R. S. Edinburgh." London Edition of 1789.



try and skill, since the Received Text was compleated by the Elzevir edition of 1624. Of these MSS. some are of far greater antiquity and authority than any of those upon which the Received Text is founded, Beza's mannscripts alone excepted ; " and yet Beza made very little use of those most excellent and valuable manuscripts, the Cambridge and Clermont. But whether a better translation can be, or has not been, made is the question ; and I reply, a better translation can be made, has been made, and that better translation is " the New Testament in an Improved Version ; " nor was my conviction of this at all weakened, nay, it was rather strengthened by the remarks you made " showing perhaps an immoderate deference to popular humour, which is always attached to customary phrases, whether they convey the true meaning, or a false meaning, or any meaning at all ; " and which same popular humour cannot endure a better and more excellent version of the New Testament than the one in common use, because, forsooth, it is " published by the Unitarian Society for promoting Christian Knowledge and the practice of virtue by the distribution of books. " When will the Christian world respect truth under whatever form she may appear ? When will it lay aside the party spirit, and sectarian prejudice, which distract and divide it, and learn to value only that which is in itself excellent and just and true, not because it is the doctrine of our venerable church ; not because it is fashionable ; not because certain learned men two or three centuries ago thought well of it ; not because popular favour and worldly advantage are on its side ; but because it is the doctrine of the New Testament ; because it will support us under the world's frown ; because it approves itself to every one's reason, and agrees with the perfections and character of the Creator ; because, like a mighty torrent it will roll on and overwhelm error, although supported by popular favour and the world's riches ? Not while such men as the Rev. J. Lister, who at least ought to allow that the Unitarians have a right as well as the Trinitarians to use that translation of the sacred writings which they think the best transcript of the original, not while he proclaims from the pulpit, (now let the daughters of Philistia triumph, give the Deist



another argument against Christians if not against Christianity,) "Is it to be tolerated that the Socinians be allowed to publish a version; the perfection of wickedness and folly?"

I heard these words, and looked around for the stately gothic pillar, having for its chapter at least an episcopal mitre; I heard these words, and might I not expect them to be succeeded by the deep toned cathedral organ? but I was too soon undeceived; the neat and unassuming column convinced me that the place I was in *ought* to be called a Dissenting Chapel, Worthies of the olden time! Fathers of dissent! Ye who contended for the right of individual judgement in matters of religion, was it for this, that ye suffered the spoiling of your goods? Was it for this, that of you the world was not worthy? That a Christian Minister, one too not episcopally ordained; that Minister a Dissenter, claiming for himself the right of private judgement, should say from a Dissenting Pulpit, "Is it to be tolerated, that the Socinians be allowed to publish a Version?" And although, in the bitterness of his heart, he called it the "perfection of wickedness and folly," others as wise, as learned, if not as orthodox, as this reverend dogmatist, have given a quite different opinion of the work.

Yes Sir, it is to be tolerated as long or longer than the Valpys of the day, who alter the text of Greisbach and then give a corrupted text to the world, as the work of that indefatigable biblical scholar. It is to be tolerated as long, and longer than the Version which inserts, 1 John v. 7, as the words of the apostle, and it will be tolerated by every sincere friend to the New Testament and its doctrines as long as a purer text is preferable to one less pure, as long as a more faithful translation is superior to one, which though excellent, is less faithful.

In support of the common version you adduced the testimony of "the great Selden," but did not add that he also said, "it (the common version) is rather translated into English words than into English phrase." Mind now, Selden himself comes within the list of your "old critics:" "now for the new." You quoted Dr. Lowth who says, "the vulgar version is the best standard of the English language," but did not add "as to the style and language, it (the present English Translation)



admits but of little improvement; but in respect to the *sense* and *accuracy of interpretation*, the improvements of which it is capable are *great and numberless*." You ought at least to have quoted what the Bishop says in his Visitation Sermon, at Durham, in 1758; in which he points out the necessity and advantages which would arise from an "accurate revisal of our vulgar translation."

You bestowed a high and well merited eulogium on the late Dr. Geddes, but your quotation from his work was partial; you stopped at the words, 'it is, however, confessedly not without its faults,' without noticing what the Dr. says of these faults of the present version: "from a superstitious attention to render the H-brew and Greek into literal English, its authors adopted modes of expression which are abhorrent from the English idiom; and perhaps from that of all other modern Tongues." "There is a manifest want of uniformity in the mode of translating." "Six persons were appointed to revise the whole, but when we consider that they were only nine months about this revision, we cannot well look for a rigorous examination of the fidelity of the version." "King James's translators mistook the true meaning of a great many words and sentences by depending too much on modern lexicons, and by paying too little attention to the ancient versions." "They incumbered their version with a load of useless italics, often without the least necessity, and almost always to the detriment of the text."\* You quoted Wesley also, but not in these words, "The common English Translation though the best I have seen, is capable of being brought, in several places, nearer to the original." Was it fair dealing with your audience to be thus partial? Even yourself acknowledge that the Common Version has its faults. And why then may not those whom you call "Socinians" as well as Trinitarians correct those faults. Why have not Unitarians as well as Trinitarians a right to "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and to give the sense and to cause the people to understand the reading?"

"If in the progress of inquiry," observes Dr. Herbert Marsh, Bishop of Peterborough, "excrescences should be discovered,

\* Prospectus of a New Translation of the Holy Bible from corrected Texts, &c, by the Rev. Alexander Geddes, L. L. D. p. 92—95



which violate the symmetry of the original fabric, which betray a mixture of the human with the divine, of interpolations which the authority or artifice of man has engrafted on the oracles of God: it is the duty of sacred criticism to detect the spurious, and remove it from the genuine. For it is not less blameable to accept what is false, than to reject what is true; it is not less inconsistent with the principles of Religion, to ascribe the authority of Scripture, to that which is not Scripture, than to refuse our acknowledgment, where such authority exists. Nor could we forget, that, if we resolve at all events to retain what has no authority to support it, we remove at once the criterion which distinguishes truth from falsehood, we involve the spurious and the genuine in the same fate, and thus deprive ourselves of the power of ever ascertaining what is the real text of the Sacred Writings." See "Dr. Herbert Marsh's Course of Lectures, containing a description and systematic arrangement of the several branches of Divinity, &c. part I. p. 26."

You exultingly asserted, that out of the number of readings in St. John's writings, viz. 1787, ten only are of importance and these do not effect any doctrine. Indeed! and is 1 John v. 7. of no importance? Does it not weaken the evidence for the Trinity? Remove this one passage only from the New Testament, and where are *three* called *one*? But the Editors of the Improved Version have removed this passage, and thereby have rendered an essential service to the unlettered Christian; they have given the sense where the Common Version leads people astray. Without this text one may travel from Dan even to Beersheba and say truly that to a Trinitarian the Land is desolate and barren; but to an Unitarian the same land is one unvaried, unfading garden, the Holy One of Israel, Jehovah the only God its protector; its wall of fire and the glory in the midst.

But "The New Testament in an IMPROVED Version," and that version too "circulated widely in this town," is what gives you and many others offence. It seems you in common with many of your christian brethren, like the Jews in the days of our Saviour, think that no good thing can come out of *Naza-*



reth; the reply is "come and see;" read the Improved Version, before you ridicule it, and read it too, "not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider," before you call it the "perfection of wickedness and folly." Who prythee are wicked, and who foolish? They who insert and defend passages, as the writings of the Apostles, which are known and acknowledged to be interpolations, or they who reject them. What version of the scriptures is to be tolerated? That which retains, or that which rejects, 1 John v. 7 a notorious corruption of the original text? and that corrupted too, not by the Unitarians; not by the believers in the only True God; not by those who contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints; but by one *Vigilius Tapsensis*, an Orthodox believer in mystery and unintelligible jargon, in, or about the latter end of the fifth century. He who wishes to drink the pure stream unpolluted, will not hesitate to answer the question.

The Editors of the New Testament in an Improved Version, have indeed noted whole chapters as spurious, among which are part of the first and the whole of the second chapter of Matthew's, and part of the first and the whole of the second chapter of Luke's Gospel; nor care I who "tells it in Gath or publishes it in Ascalon," as long as they have given, as I conceive ample reasons for doing this. They do not, Sir, say, this makes the "Evangelist speak nonsense, that makes him a fool," "this sentence, in point of absurdity, sets all exposition at defiance," "that is mysterious and must therefore be rejected." This, Sir, they have not done, but they have, in every passage of moment wherein they give a different rendering from the common Version, given their reasons for that variation, and this not in an abrupt, offensive manner, but by a plain, unvarnished statement of what appears to them to be the truth, regardless of the world's smile or frown. They endeavour to give a faithful rendering of the original, "to give the sense," as far as the abilities with which by the blessing of God they are endowed, enable them, and to him they leave the consequences. They at least argue instead of declaiming. I shall quote part of their note on the last nine



verses of the first and the whole of the second chapter, of Matthew.

“The remainder of this chapter, and the whole of the second, are printed in Italics, as an intimation that they are of doubtful authority. They are indeed to be found in all the manuscripts and versions which are now extant; but from the direct testimony of Epiphanius, and indirectly from that of Jerome, (see Mr. Pope on *Mir. Concept.* p. 93.) we learn that they were wanting in the copies used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, that is, by the ancient Hebrew Christians; for whose instruction, probably, the gospel of Matthew was originally written; and to whom the account of the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ could not have been unacceptable, if it had been found in the genuine narrative. Nor would it at all have militated against the doctrine of the proper humanity of Christ, which was universally held by the Jewish Christians, it being a fact analagous to the miraculous birth of Isaac, Samuel, and other eminent persons of the Hebrew nation.” Here is a simple statement of facts they do not mark the passage as of doubtful authority, without acknowledging that it is found in every manuscript and version extant. Is this conduct deserving of the sarcastic remarks you made on Wednesday evening? Rather is it not deserving of your praise, and of the praise of every one who gives another the privilege he claims for himself? But the common version has 1 John v. 7. “without either note or comment.” The claims then of these Editors “are indeed very high” on public gratitude for having, in their edition of the New Testament, stated their reasons for rejecting or inserting the common, or the Primate’s translation, as also their reasons for doubting the genuineness of certain parts of the scriptures, inasmuch as the public are thereby informed of important variations from the original text, and that they may not trust to a broken staff for support in defending some momentous doctrines. Even if the Unitarian Society’s edition of the New Testament answered no other purpose than to expunge 1 John v. 7. the word “*God*” from 1 Tim. iii. 16. “*of God*” from Acts xx. 28. it might with the greatest propriety be called an Improvement on the common version; it does expunge them and gives the reason for so doing. It is then as the title page expresses “The New Testament in an Improved Version.”

As it relates to conjectural readings, you must be aware that those passages in the common version printed in Italics are conjectural readings. But your objection stated that the editors professed not to adopt conjectural readings and yet abide not by the rule; your instances of this were Matthew and Luke i. and ii. Speaking of attempts made to correct the Received Text by Critical Conjecture they say, “It ought perhaps to be laid down as a general rule, that the Received Text is in no case to be altered by critical, or at least by theo-



logical conjecture, how ingenious and plausible soever." But in the instances you adduced the editors have not adopted conjectural readings they have given the whole of Matthew's and Luke's two first chapters, and all they have done is to state their opinion as to their authenticity leaving it to their readers to think with them or not as they see fit.\*

Your next objection is, that the Editors of the New Testament in an Improved Version, profess to follow Archbishop Newcome, and have yet contradicted him without acknowledgement. But in proof of this you brought forward no one passage whatever; even if you had, what would it prove? Not that the Editors wished to deceive under the cloak of Newcome, whose "reputation stands deservedly high;" but that in so large a work "some errors may have occurred from inadvertence, but it is hoped they are neither numerous nor important; they are at least involuntary."† But had you attentively read the title page and preface, you would have perceived that the Editors took Archbishop Newcome's Translation as a *basis*; it was their design "to give not their own, but the Primate's Version to the public, corrected only, or at least principally, in those passages in which it was apprehended that the learned Prelate's Translation might lead to a misconception of the meaning of the sacred writers."‡ "Having selected Archbishop Newcome's Translation as their basis, it became an object with the committee, to guard as much as possible against giving their Improved Version a motley appearance, by departing unnecessarily from the Primate's text. To this end they assumed it as a principle, that no alteration should be made in the Primate's Translation, but where it appeared to be necessary to the correction of error or inaccuracy in the text, the language, the construction or the sense."§ Without even adducing a single instance of contradiction to the Archbishop, and with the Editors' preface before you, my surprise is, that you could venture to make the assertions which you did; at any rate I expected you would have found out something definite at which to cavil. But you had not even "a local habitation," in which to shelter your argument. Threadbare, and clothed in thin drapery, it scarcely needs farther exposure.

"This version" you said "can alter the text altogether:" I know it can, and has done it; but is it not justified in so doing? Does not 1 John iii. 16. according to the common

\* For further information on the authenticity of the Introductory Chapters to Matthew and Luke, see "A Course of Lectures (lately published) by the Rev. George Harris," in which the most ample proofs of their unauthenticity are adduced, and in which are many excellent remarks on the different English translations.

† See advertisement to the Fourth Edition of the New Testament in an Improved Version, p. iv.

‡ See p. iv. of the Improved Version.

§ See p. vi. of the Introduction to ditto.



version actually and literally represent God as dying, as laying down his life for us? But in the original Greek the word "*του Θεου, of God*" does not occur, nor any other word between "Hereby perceive we love," and "because he laid," &c. Both the common and the Improved Version adopt a conjectural reading, the literal rendering of the Greek being "In this we understood the love," of whom is not mentioned. But it is evident that to make sense of the passage the elision after "the love" must be supplied. Now the death of God being in itself a thing impossible, it never having been said in any one passage of scripture that the ETERNAL *laid down his life* for man; and since Christ is represented in many passages of Scripture as dying for the happiness of men; is not the Improved Version correct? Could a more fit word be used to fill up the elision, than that word which is used; for to whom can the context "he laid down his life" be applied, if not to the Christ? If this be granted, here is another important *improvement* on the common version.

In 1 John iv. 9. John i. 16. 18. you further object that the Editors have instead of "only begotten Son" inserted "only son." But of what importance is this variation as to doctrine? Does the one phrase militate against the Deity of Christ more than the other? I, were I a believer in the Eternal sonship of Christ, should think that the reading of the Improved is more favourable to that doctrine than the reading of the common version; and this shows the impartiality of the rendering "only Son." But I here subjoin the Note on John i. 16. 18. from the Improved Version.

"This expression does not refer to any peculiar mode of derivation of existence, but is used to express merely a higher degree of affection. It is applied to Isaac, Heb. xi. 17. though Abraham had other sons. The same word in the Hebrew is translated indifferently *μονογενής only begotten* and *αγαπητός well beloved*. This word is applied to Christ by the evangelist John four times in the gospel, and once in his epistle: and by no other writer of the New Testament. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it unquestionably signifies beloved or most beloved: and in this sense it is used by John ch. i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9. "He seems to adopt it," says Mr. Lindsey, (Seq. p. 139) "on all occasions where the other sacred writers would have said *αγαπητός well beloved*." Compare Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; Mark i. 11; ix. 7; xii. 6; Luke iii. 22; ix. 35. See Cappe, *ibid.* p. 94, and Grotius in loc. Mr. Lindsey observes, that "*only begotten* is most gross and improper language to be used in English, especially with respect to Deity." List of Wrong Translations, p. 46.

Following Dr. Laurence, you charge these Editors with having altered the text by "critical conjecture, contrary to their own canon." But where have they done this, have they done it in a single instance? See, particularly, 1 John i.



vi. 4. Rom. ix. 5. in the Improved Version, the places against which the charges of the learned Dr. Laurence are brought.\* But what will you, and what will any plain man say of the Translation of the Authorized Version, when I refer you to Heb. ii. 16, in which the Translators have most unjustifiably thrust in the words *the nature of*, which you, Sir, know are in no copy of the Greek of the New Testament. Your charge of absurdity on the Version of Col. i. 20, recoils upon your own head, for give me leave to say, that your ridicule of the Editors of the Improved Version on this passage could only excite pity in your hearers on your own account. As well as at the attempt at wit, respecting the human form, a man, being the object of sight, in your reference to their Version of 1 Tim. iii. 16. You reason as if the word *God* was the genuine reading; you know better, Sir, you know when, how and by whom, the word *Θεός*, *God*, was introduced into this text; that it was not found in any MSS. or even Versions, till after it had been corrupted by Macedonius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, in the beginning of the 6th century.† And give me leave to tell you, Sir, that you ought to inform your hearers of these things; but perhaps ignorance may preserve the already tottering system of reputed orthodoxy a few years longer.

That the Improved Version should, as you say, have nothing to do with "angels or devils," seems very much to hurt your feelings, and to string your nerves to the torture. Do you never, Sir, make a point of explaining these words; and telling your congregation that the translators of the common version have, in almost every instance, substituted the word *Devil* for *Jemon*, and this probably at the command of their Lord and Master King James; as they at the same command, used the words *church* for *congregation*, *bishop* for *overseer*, &c.? The superiority of Jesus to angels, allowing your own ideas to be correct, would prove no superiority of nature, but of office only. The Scripture concerns men and no other order of beings. Men called angels, messengers, in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, yourself being judge. The office Jesus was superior to that of all God's other messengers, and in asserting this, it remains to be proved, that the Editors of the Improved Version either make the apostle speak nonsense, or shew that the Son is superior to the Father. Your allusion to a seat being inferior to or below a person on whom it supports, however it might as a flower of rhetoric adorn your discourse, could not I think be well received by the serious part of your audience, if they under-

\* See the "Bampton Lecturer Reproved," by the Rev. Thomas Belam; in which two of the most illiberal and scurrilous writers of the age Dr. Moysey and Dr. Magee, have met with a proper and well merited castigation.

† See Sir Isaac Newton's "Hist. Acc. of two notable corruptions of Scripture," vol. 5, of his Works, 4to. Horsley's Edition, 1785.



stood it: however that might be, it reflects no honor either on your understanding or your religious opinions. As well might you say that God is made by the authorized version less than the saints, when he is called their rock, their refuge, their hiding place, their support, &c. as to say, that God being the throne or the support of Jesus, and of his kingdom "makes the apostle talk nonsense" or represents "the Son as greater than the Father." The passage is a literal quotation from Psalm xlv. 6. the words "O God," are applied to Solomon.

"This prince of Versions," said you, in a tone of irony, "calls Christ," "not God, but *a* God; not the true God, not the Great God, but a little God by the side of the Great God." Need *you* be told Sir, that the word God with the article, *ο Θεος*, is in no one instance applied to Jesus of Nazareth—and that in the passage John i. 1. it is *Θεος, God*, not *ο Θεος, the God*. If Jesus was really and properly the infinite and eternal God, then he must be the *only God*; for the Scriptures declare there is but *one God* and in that case, who was the God he was with? Let every man of common sense judge.

Your attack upon the Unitarians whom you call "*Soci-nians*," although you know they disavow the appellation, has been conducted with more than a little acrimony; even the tone of your voice discovered that ill-nature was lurking in your bosom; and your assertions were in many instances as false as they were illiberal: this would, I think, soon become apparent to yourself, if, with your Lecture in your hand, you would read the Improved Version with the Notes of the Editors, and suffer your understanding to conquer our prejudices, or at least to suspend their operation on our mind for a short period.

In concluding these pages, some apology is I think proper to be made to you for their publication. If I have in any instance misrepresented your language, if I have quoted your arguments incorrectly, believe me, I have not done either the one or the other intentionally. I well know that it is extremely difficult to do justice to the reasonings of an unpublished discourse; and this would have deterred me from making these remarks on your lecture, had I not also considered that whatever the sentiments of any man, he is guilty of a dereliction of duty, if he permit them to be calumniated without attending a reply. If then I have not done you justice, I assure you that I am sorry for it, and "if I have missed of it, it is my fault, but my misfortune."

I am, Rev. Sir, Respectfully Yours,

October 24th, 1820.

PHILALETHERS.

F. B. Wright, Printer, Liverpool.